



## Inspirational Health Stories

### **Bruce Casale, from Newark, Delaware - "A Positive Attitude-The Best Medicine"**

He was only 52 years old, but he was carrying over 400 pounds on his 5'10" frame and 60" waist. He had been overweight his entire life. He knew his excessive weight kept him from doing most of the things others take for granted. His legs ached from the pressure the weight caused. Combine that with a very stressful managerial position, and you have all the ingredients for that feared word – "Stroke!" Could such an event actually be for your good? Bruce Casale found out that, although a stroke is never good, it was a lifestyle-altering and life-saving experience for him. Through his story, he hopes it will be so for many others, too.

Not one, but two, strokes struck Bruce in one month, completely changing his life. He no longer could walk, talk, read, or write. But at least he wasn't paralyzed. Gradually he learned to walk again - first with a walker, then a cane, and now without assistance. Reading and writing would also have to be relearned. In fact, math and numbers just suddenly "came back to him" one day. Talking and writing would take longer. The hospitalization was four months long. During those months Bruce knew that his positive attitude was the "key" to recovery. He chose to adopt a "glass half-full" mentality and took each day as it came. Recovery was difficult and required hard work every day. But he never gave up. Besides his optimistic mental attitude, Bruce credits his remarkable recovery to his wife Katie and their two children. They inspired him to get well. And well he has become.

Today at 54, Bruce is not the same person – both figuratively and literally. Now at a weight of 220 pounds, he has literally "lost another person" versus his former weight. Before the strokes, he thought little about diet and exercise. Now he walks 5-6 miles a day and follows a healthy diet. He also works out daily in the Fitness Center of the Newark Senior Center in Newark, Delaware, where he gives talks on stroke survival and participates in discussion groups. Bruce can now write again, and he has just recently begun to read again. He's also come to enjoy sending e-mail on his PC, an experience he calls "freeing". Though he still has a ways to go, he is making steady progress daily, for which he is grateful.

Bruce has been recognized by not only the staff of his senior center as one of their "Healthy Heroes", but by a number of other civic and state organizations, too. He has become a speaker for the American Stroke Association, giving presentations at other senior centers and to other groups in his community.

What is Bruce's next major goal? To take his story into the corporate world where countless others need to hear his life-changing message before a stroke hits them. It's a message he feels strongly must be passed on. Stroke prevention has become his passion so others can become proactive, rather than just reactive. Bruce knows he has, forever, been changed for the better by his "stroke of luck".